

prime mover in the intrigues that precipitated the break-up of the Asquith Coalition. Apart from that, he had defeatist propensities which would have weakened a Government called into being for the more vigorous prosecution of the War.

This latter observation would have been equally

applicable to Mr. Runciman.

Moreover, in a

Government where prompt and effective

Characteristics action was the dominant aim, he would

Mr. Runciman not have found a suitable niche.

Although he is a man of high intelligence,

there is a lack of continuity and persistent application

which has always accounted for his failure to achieve

any distinguished success in any of the various

offices which he has held. He never follows through.

The energy and mastery which he succeeds in

conveying in his speeches evaporate before they are

translated into masterful action. His most

conspicuous attribute is a glib inefficacy, which

can explain and expound with forcible and relevant

fluency what he is after and why he has never got it.

He has a perfect command of the whole jargon of

business, and he flips it about in his speeches with a

dexterity which awes the ignorant and impresses even

the proficient. There he excels and there he also ends.

After the last Cabinet he ever attended Lord

Kitchener walked across with me to the Ministry of Munitions.

It was his first and last visit to that

Department. Mr. Runciman had taken
Kitchener's view of him a conspicuous part in a
discussion at the
Cabinet meeting. On my
referring to
the clarity with which he had put his
case, Lord
Kitchener observed : " No man in the
Cabinet has
disappointed me as much as Runciman.
When I
first joined the Cabinet he came to me
and said that